

A GERMAN PLACE IN THE AFRICAN SUN--A PRICE OF PEACE

The Dream of a Teutonic Empire Stretching from Ocean to Ocean.

By FRANK H. SIMONDS,
Author of "The Great War."

Two weeks ago, in discussing the various problems that will rise when Europe begins to consider peace, I purposely omitted any detailed reference to African questions, which are sufficiently important to deserve more detailed examination. In point of fact, it is not too much to say that at the present time the one possibility of peace is to be found in the off-chance that the enemies of Germany will consent to make sacrifices in Africa which will be sufficiently attractive to persuade Germany to evacuate conquered French and Belgian territories and sign a peace that will leave the map of Western Europe, at least, as it was in July, 1914.

It is a natural consequence of the dramatic character of the campaign that ever since the Anglo-French fleet began its unsuccessful operation at the Dardanelles the world has watched with interest and with growing comprehension the revelation of German designs upon a place in the sun, a place in Western Asia, which should serve at once as a present basis for Germany's commercial expansion and a future base for a renewal of her attack upon the British Empire. For months the world has thought of Cairo, Bagdad, and even of India, to the exclusion of an even more ambitious German plan in Africa, which she has pursued for more than a generation.

German Africa.

When the Great War opened Germany possessed four African colonies: Togoland, which was insignificant and had never been regarded by the Germans as more than a resource for future bargaining, either with Great Britain or with France—it was offered to France at the time of the Agadir crisis; Kamerun, which had been lately increased by 100,000 square miles through French cessions as "compensations" for acquisitions in Morocco; German East Africa, the best colony Germany owned, and German Southwest Africa, adjoining the Union of South Africa.

It had been the dream of Germans for long years to erect an African Empire, which should include the Congo Valley and extend from the borders of the Sahara to the Cape of Good Hope and from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. The conquest and annexation by the British of the two Boer republics had been the initial blow to German plans, and the Kaiser's telegram to President Krüger remains perhaps the first authentic sign of the growing hatred of Germany for Great Britain, the original outward manifestation of the coming rivalry.

With the annexation of the two Boer republics Germany was deprived of all immediate chance of including those Teutonic states in a German South Africa. She still preserved the hope that, using German West Africa as a base, she would be able in case of a war with Britain to stir up revolt in the Boer districts and thus bring the British colonial edifice in South Africa down in ruins. Faithful to this purpose, she began in the early days of the present war an invasion of the Union of South Africa, aided by a local revolt. But she was decisively beaten, because the greatest of Boer leaders, Botha, chose to fight for Britain. The campaign ended in the conquest of German Southwest Africa by Botha, and there is small prospect that any peace will restore this lost colony to Germany.

From Ocean to Ocean.

After the Boer War had, temporarily at least, brought her to a standstill in South Africa Germany resumed the grandiose plan of extending German rule from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean and making Central Africa a German colonial empire. As far back as the Congress of Berlin, in 1875, Germany had dreamed this dream. Bismarck, in favoring the creation of the Congo Free State, which was to be ruled by Leopold of Belgium, had merely sought to preserve intact a great area of African territory until that time when Germany should be strong enough to strike for a share in the colonial domain of Europe.

But between German Kamerun and German East Africa there intervened not alone the Belgian Congo Free State, but the French colony of the Congo, which occupied a long stretch of the Atlantic Coast from Spanish Guinea to the Portuguese enclave of Cabinda, at the mouth of the Congo, and extended north along the Congo and Ubanghi, and thence to Lake Chad and to British Sudan, joining the French Saharan districts of Wadai and

DEUTSCHLAND UEBER ALLES IN CENTRAL AFRICA.



Solid Black Shows German Colonies—Shaded Portion Indicates Territory Germany Wants.

Kamerun, and giving France an interrupted empire from the Mediterranean to the banks of the Congo.

To realize their dream it was necessary for the Germans to dispose of the French first, and then, having carried their Kamerun colony to the western bank of the Ubanghi and the Congo, join hands with German East Africa across the Belgian territory. Long considered, carefully planned, this project was only clearly revealed to the world when the Agadir crisis brought France and Great Britain to the edge of war with Germany.

At that time the Germans opened the negotiations in Berlin with the proposal that they should hold a portion of Morocco. "West Marokko deutsch!" was the familiar and seducing war cry of a large portion of the German press. Could they obtain it, a naval base on the Moroccan coast was an immediate profit to be taken, and taken without regard to the eventual possibilities to the south. But the British opposition successfully blocked this plan. Still unwilling to run the risks incident to a war with Great Britain, Germany acquiesced in French supremacy in the Shereefian Empire.

Congo "Compensations."

As a counterbalance to French gains in the north, the Germans successfully advanced claims for compensation in the Congo region. After long bargaining, which seemed at times to be certain to end in war, there was signed in Berlin that amazing agreement which set forth to the whole world the German aims in Central Africa.

By this treaty France ceded to Germany more than 100,000 square miles of her north, the Belgian Congo Free State, Congo province. But more interesting than the statistics was the meaning of the French surrender. By the new agreement Germany acquired two points of contact with the Ubanghi-Congo rivers. She was thus brought to grips with the Belgian frontier, and two German railways, one already advanced from the Indian Ocean to

Lake Tanganyika, the other building from the Kamerun coast toward the Congo, foreshadowed the eventual construction of a trans-African line which should join the two German colonies and pave the way for Teutonic penetration of the Belgian Congo.

It is interesting to recall that Bernhardt, writing at the time the Morocco agreement was being signed, inquired whether the annexation of the Congo had not in fact deprived Belgium of her right to claim neutrality in Europe. Other German writers took up the cry. As for the French, their feelings were best described by Gabriel Hanotaux, a former Foreign Minister, who sadly commented, "We had an empire and they have left us corridors."

On all sides it was recognized that the Berlin agreement was but a temporary affair, certain to be cast into the melting pot when the day of war, no longer doubted in France, should come.

Peace Possibilities.

So much for the past history. Now the moment has come in the Great War when the discussion of peace seems not impossible; at least there are growing signs of a willingness on the part of Germany to discuss peace terms, terms of a "victorious peace," be it understood, but of a peace which at one time recognizes German achievement and does not call upon Germany's opponents to make sacrifices which they are not yet willing to make and are not sufficiently beaten to be compelled to make.

In this situation the talk of African concessions has already been heard and will be heard with growing frequency in the next few months. Thus, not a few German writers have already suggested that Germany should agree to evacuate France and Belgium in return for the cession by France and Belgium of their colonial territories lying between the Kamerun and German East Africa.

This suggestion takes cognizance of certain obvious facts. Neither France nor Great Britain can or will agree to peace

until Belgium is evacuated and the integrity of French territory assured. It would mean the prolongation of the war by several years if Germany should insist upon permanent possession of any part of France or Belgium. But if France is asked to surrender only the mutilated Congo region, taking in exchange Togoland and possibly obtaining German assent to a formal annexation of Morocco, thus eliminating all hampering restrictions created by the Berlin Treaty, would the French refuse?

Conceivably, and the project was broached before the war, Germany might consent to reimburse France further by the cession of the French-speaking districts of Lorraine, which include Metz and have upward of 300,000 inhabitants, two-thirds French. This would give France a safe eastern frontier and might end the Alsace-Lorraine problem, which has hampered German colonial aspirations so heavily for the last forty years.

There are other variations that have been mentioned. Germany might consent to pay Belgium not an indemnity for her losses, but a considerable sum for her African province, which would amount to the same thing. She might even consent to Belgian annexation of Luxemburg, a remote but conceivable concession.

England's Share.

Such an agreement might dispose of France and Belgium. In point of fact, it is extremely unlikely that France would consent to such a bargain, but this will not prevent the Germans from proposing it, as it has not stopped them from discussing it. But what of England?

This proposed German expansion in Central Africa would at once wreck the British dream of a Cape-to-Cairo empire. It would mean that a solid block of German territory would interpose between British Uganda and the South African protectorates and between Nigeria and British Sudan. It would make Germany and not Great Britain the leading power in Central Africa; it would not impossibly presage precisely the same kind of con-

tinuing warfare between Britain and Germany in Africa that France and England waged in North America for so many generations.

But the Germans have an answer. They purpose to cede to Great Britain the colony of Southwest Africa, which has already been conquered by Botha; the German possessions in the Pacific, which have been taken over by the Australians, and to assent to the present situation in Kiaochow. In return Great Britain will be asked to evacuate the Kamerun, now for the most part jointly occupied by the British and French expeditions. The evacuation of Belgium and Northern France is a further reward for British acquiescence, for the German advance to the Channel is primarily a thrust at Britain.

What concessions Germany might be willing to make in the Near East, to what extent she would consent to abandon her threat at Egypt and India and surrender her predominant position in Constantinople, it is not possible to say. At the moment there is no evidence that Germany would make any concession, but, on the other hand, her desire for peace is unmistakable.

Germany's "Place in the Sun."

The basis of the German protest against things as they are has lain in the fact that alone of the great European powers Germany has had no real share in the division of the world's surface outside of Europe. Achieving her own unity late, arriving in time only to obtain a few minor possessions, the "left overs" of the great colonial scramble of the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century, Germany has been compelled to face the growing disadvantage of hostile tariffs and to see nations inferior in population, like Great Britain, or lacking all surplus population to furnish colonists, like France, in possession of the richest portions of Africa and of Asia.

For herself Germany has claimed and claims the right to a colonial empire commensurate with her own population, wealth and commercial resources. Since she achieved her unity France has acquired Tunis, Madagascar, Morocco and expanded meagre West African holdings into

an empire and Indo-Chinese posts into a colony larger than the fatherland. In the same time Great Britain has acquired Egypt, the South African republics, the Sudan, while Russia has completed the organization of her enormous Asiatic territories that will one day make her the most powerful of civilized nations.

At the bottom German resentment over all this goes far to explain the causes of the present conflict. Having fought now to the conclusion three great campaigns in which she has won considerable successes without achieving the complete elimination of either France or Russia; having yet to face the full power of Great Britain, still practically without a scratch, Germany may well seek to make peace, provided she can obtain for her tremendous sacrifices in life and treasure some commensurate profit. This profit is not within her grasp in Western Europe; it is hardly within her grasp in Europe at all, as yet.

The German argument will doubtless be that unless she obtains her "place in the sun" now she will inevitably resume the struggle hereafter, if the war ends unfavorably or falls short of her hopes. Would it not be wiser for Europe to recognize the fact now, concede to her a "place in the sun" commensurate with her own vision and thus remove a peril otherwise bound to grow?

The Statistics of a Dream.

Accepting now the frontiers for Germany's Central African colony of the future as outlined above, what would it mean? How would it compare with other world empires?

The area of German East Africa is 325,000 square miles, the population 8,000,000. The Kamerun has an area of 300,000 square miles, one-third comprising the cessions of France in the Morocco time, and a population of 2,500,000. Belgian Congo has an area of above 900,000 square miles and a population of 15,500,000. French Congo has an area of 550,000 square miles and a population of 4,600,000.

Roughly speaking—and exact statistics are still lacking for these regions—Germany's new colony, thus constituted,

How the Germans Hope to Make the Congo River Another Rhine.

(Copyright, 1915—
The Tribune Ass'n.)

would have an area of 2,100,000 square miles and a population of 30,000,000. This is ten times the size of the German Empire, two-thirds the area of the United States without Alaska and more than twice that of British India.

Even this huge colony might be increased by further agreements between Great Britain and Germany which would divide the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola, which adjoin British and German territories or prospective territories. Thus there might be assured to Germany the entire watershed of the Congo, the lakes at the head of the Nile system and a frontage on the Sahara at its narrowest point, which might open the way to a Trans-Saharan railway from the Italian colony of Tripoli.

Here would be an adequate field for German colonial activity and German commercial development. In all respects save one it would satisfy even German appetite, but this is a serious limitation. All this region is tropical and utterly unsuited for European colonization, save only certain portions of the uplands of German East Africa. Necessarily Germany would be compelled to make this Central African empire one of exploitation, not of colonization, but until Britain is conquered or American opposition to annexation of South American territory is eliminated, it is the best Germany can do.

A Remote Possibility Still.

At the present moment German demands stand small chance of carrying. This is due to the fact that across their pathway lies the one nation which has suffered little so far in the war. For Great Britain a German empire in Central Africa would be a menace bound to grow with the years and certain to lead to other disputes and probably to other wars. It is completely within British power, so long as she retains control of the sea, to destroy these hopes, whatever the course of the war in Europe.

And, faithful to her tradition, Great Britain is steadily destroying the bases of German colonial ambition. Southwest Africa has been completely conquered. Togoland was snapped up by Anglo-French forces in the first days of the war, all but a small central district of the Kamerun has been occupied by French, Belgian and British expeditions and France has already redeemed the Moroccan "compensations" and broken the German tentacles stretched out to the Ubanghi and the Congo.

Only German East Africa remains practically intact, but even here the sea-coast has been occupied and German garrisons have retired inland. An expedition is said to be forming in South Africa under the leadership of Botha to repeat in a new field the success of Southwest Africa and translate into fact Cecil Rhodes's magnificent dream of a Cape-to-Cairo "all-red" map. Against such an expedition German resistance must crumble, since the garrison is small and its resources, as a result of a year and four months of blockade, greatly reduced.

Even should France and Belgium consent to make the sacrifices demanded, British opposition could nullify the bargain, and there is no reason to believe that France or even Belgium will now make the sacrifices. As for Great Britain, she is to-day doing what she did in the wars of the eighteenth century and the Napoleonic era. While the conflict in Europe proceeds unfavorably to her own Allies she is sweeping off the map the colors of her great rival in Africa and in Europe and in the Pacific. So far there is no reason why she should consent to any sacrifice to Germany.

What Germany Expects.

Yet in estimating the present situation it is necessary to take into account German expectations and purposes. The German dream of a Central African empire has been clearly disclosed and German purpose to make peace terms the basis for a realization of ante-bellum aspirations in Africa, if not in Europe, must be recognized.

Six months hence, when all belligerents are nearer the point of exhaustion, if none is yet conquered, the African bargain may have attractions for the French and Belgians which will prove compelling and British consent may then be had.

The importance of the African possibilities now lies in the fact that even in Germany it is realized that the evacuation of France and Belgium will have to come and that the possibility of an indemnity from France is remote. There is left the African colonial compensations. They have already begun to crop up in German discussions; they will be the main topic of peace conversations a few months hence, possibly a few weeks hence, if there is any discussion of peace at all before the time for a spring campaign in the west.